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Ad Hoc Informal Meeting
28 November 2000

FORMAL SEGMENT

RECORD OF DECISIONS

I. **Recommendations of the GEPW concerning the programme of work and decision of the Commission thereon**

1. It was recalled that the Plan of Action adopted by the Commission in 1997 provides that the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW) will meet prior to the preparation of the programme budget submission by the Executive Secretary, and, on the basis of information before it, including the priorities identified by the Principal Subsidiary Bodies, will formulate recommendations on any adjustments and shifts in the ECE programme of work. Such recommendations will be considered by an Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission which, for this purpose, will convent into a formal session to take a decision in respect of the recommendations.

2. The Chairman noted that the Group had concluded its work in this connection and its report, with recommendations, had been transmitted to all member countries under cover of the Executive Secretary's letter of 22 November 2000.

3. The recommendations submitted were:

- No change to the current human resources distribution among sub-programmes for the next biennium;

- PSBs to pay particular attention to intersectoral issues when determining their work programmes;

- In determining their work programmes, PSBs to take account of known and potential demands for contributions to global events and conferences;

- Commission to acknowledge the need to strengthen the staff of the Office of the Executive Secretary in order to meet the increasing demands placed on ECE as a regional commission.

4. The Commission adopted the four recommendations of the GEPW.

5. The delegates of the Russian Federation and Georgia raised a number of concerns about the resources implications associated with recommendations one and four.

6. The Chairman of the GEPW said that the fourth recommendation was not intended to have any budgetary implication in its wording. The important point which the Group considered needed to be highlighted was that the Commission needed to recognize the increasing demands placed upon the ECE as a regional commission to contribute to global events and conferences. As far as the Group of Experts was concerned, this recommendation only required the Commission to recognize the increasing demands placed on the ECE but did not make any budgetary recommendation as to how or when the OES should be strengthened. At the same time however, the Group wanted PSBs to consider as a priority inter-linkages and responding to global events when setting their work programmes. He also underlined that the first recommendation referred only to the resource distribution among the PSBs.

7. The Executive Secretary explained that the decision process for the budget within the United Nations system was clearly defined. The final decision was decided in different structures than the Commission, such as the ACABQ and the fifth Committee of the General Assembly.

8. The delegate of the Russian Federation requested that these concerns be reflected in the report of the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting.

II. Recommendations of the GEPW in respect of the format of the annual session of the Commission

9. The Chairman of the GEPW submitted the recommendations for adoption and amended the first one in so doing.

- The Spring Seminar could be extended in length, in which case the Annual Session would be correspondingly modified, bearing in mind the parameters set by the 1997 Plan of Action; (The Chairman suggested that the word "would" in the second line be changed to "could" He clarified that no reduction in the length of the annual session was recommended.)

- The theme of the Spring Seminar to be determined by the end of July. An extraordinary Ad Hoc Informal meeting of the Commission to be arranged if consensus was not possible at the June meeting;

- The Spring Seminar to be discussed by the Commission at the Annual Session: recommendations or conclusions arising from such a discussion to be taken into consideration by relevant PSBs when determining their work programmes;

- Greater emphasis to be given to cross-sectoral issues during the Annual Session, with a specific focus on inter-linkages between PSBs, and with external actors;

- A roundtable format and other innovative approaches to be applied as appropriate during the Annual Session to discuss particular issues;

- The annual Session agenda to preserve flexibility to discuss an economic issue of topical importance as appropriate.

10. The Commission adopted the recommendations of the GEPW as amended by its Chairman.

11. The Chairman closed the formal segment.